

Olympic coin on the cutting edge

By Roger Boye

Uncle Sam will resurrect an unusual minting device—edge lettering—for the Olympic coin program that begins next year.

The inscription "XXV Olympiad" will appear four times along the edge of each uncirculated 1992-dated silver dollar to be sold to collectors. Those letters might replace the grooves (or "reads") that normally go on the edge of a commemorative dollar.

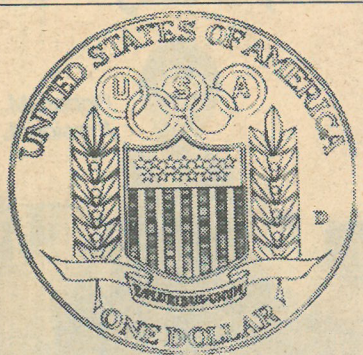
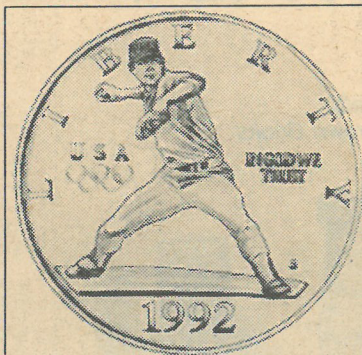
Technicians will invert every other inscription so that the lettering will look alternately right-side-up and upside-down whether the coin is examined from the front or back.

"We've done it before, and we're ready to do it again," said Hamilton Dix, a U.S. Mint spokesperson. "It's a definite 'go.'"

The federal government has used edge lettering on a handful of other coin types, most recently on the Saint-Gaudens \$20 gold pieces made from 1907 to 1933. Those coins had "e pluribus unum" on the edge.

In the 1600s, the British Royal Mint produced some of the world's first coins with lettered edges, in part to help protect them from counterfeiters. Today, the device is used largely as an ornament and usually on commemorative coinage.

The 1992 silver dollar will depict a baseball pitcher on the front side and a shield on the back. Baseball becomes an Olym-



The U.S. Olympiad dollar for 1992 will have the rare feature of lettering instead of grooves (or "reads") on its edges.

pic sport for the first time at the 1992 Summer Games in Barcelona, Spain.

Ordering information for the three Olympic coin types of 1992—half dollar, silver dollar and \$5 gold piece—will be announced early next year.



The nation's largest organization of coin collectors is going after the "grumpies"—grown-up, mature persons—in its efforts to recruit new members.

For years, the American Numismatic Association has attempted to interest youngsters in coin collecting and have them join the 31,000-member organization. But the ANA's new president believes older folks now offer the ANA its best opportunity for growth.

"These are people with disposable income, with their mortgages

paid off and their children through school," ANA President Edward C. Rochette wrote in the October issue of *The Numismatist*. "Let's introduce them to the fun world of coin collecting."

In the 12 months that ended March 31, nearly 4,700 people joined the ANA, but the organization still had a net decline in membership because of resignations and deaths.

Meanwhile, the ANA has donated copies of its two-volume centennial history and accompanying one-volume anthology to the Harold Washington Library Center at 400 S. State St. The ANA was founded in Chicago on Oct. 7, 1891, and the new library was dedicated on the same date 100 years later.

The ANA held its 100th anniversary convention in suburban Rosemont last August.